

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 10, 2010

Session 10-05, a Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Commission was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Vice Chair Ravin on August 10, 2010 at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska.

PRESENT: COMMISSIONER DAUPHINAIS, ERICKSON, NEECE, RAVIN

ABSENT: COMMISSIONER HOPPE, FAULKNER, SIMPSON (all excused)

STAFF: SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR HOLEN
DEPUTY CITY CLERK JACOBSEN

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comments.

RECONSIDERATION

There were no items for reconsideration.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2010

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Commission.

VISITORS

There were no visitors scheduled.

STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORT

Councilmember Wythe was absent.

Special Projects Coordinator Holen commented that the Spit Comp Plan schedule included is tentative and that the Alaska Economic Reports will be coming to an end as the subscription has been cancelled.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no items for public hearing.

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Economic Development Compare and Contrast

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Commissioner Dauphinais reviewed the information he provided in the packet. He noted that it is important for the economic development organization and the Chamber to work together and he found that the successful groups have a structure worked out. Locally he has observed that there is not a structure between the Borough, City, and Chamber and he isn't sure how it would work. His perception is the EDD is a lone company who gets their money from what they fund. The Chamber works with other things and it is good to keep the associations they have because of the emphasis on tourism. In getting into other economic development issues, it needs to be determined who will be the spearhead, how it will be funded, who will do the lobbying and so forth.

The Commission discussed how they should proceed, ideas for the structure of the organization, and funding. It was suggested that this could be a section in the Community Economic Development Strategy and Commissioner Dauphinais offered to write up the information and pass it on to Ms. Holen.

Chair Erickson recalled Commissioner Simpson's previous suggestion of having the City's resume available on line on the City's website. It could be a temporary stop gap until this all gets fleshed out.

B. City of Homer Capital Improvement Plan

Commissioner Ravin asked to include the sterling highway reconstruction project as his fifth preference. The Commission agreed to forward their recommendations to City Council.

C. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (draft)

Special Projects Coordinator Holen reviewed the draft.

Comments for consideration included:

- Recommendations regarding promoting export and light manufacturing.
- Adding a rail line for the transportation sector.
- Recommendations regarding economic development structure, as discussed earlier.
- The Comprehensive Plan has significant information regarding tourism, how much should be included in the CEDS.
- Should information regarding large stores be included.
- Addressing hi tech internet business.
- Listing banking and finance under services.
- Clarification of the downtown revitalization. There is still confusion that both the new city hall and the town center were voted down.
- Bringing town square up into Pioneer Avenue.
- A permanent home for Farmer's Market.
- Accommodating full size RV's in Homer.
- Addressing specific improvements for Pioneer Avenue.

Chair Erickson requested the CEDS and also the information regarding the economic development organization be included on the next agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

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No new business items were scheduled.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

- A. Memo to Planning Commission regarding Homer Spit Comprehensive Plan
- B. Homer News Article: Homer high-tech company
- C. Items of possible interest from recent City Council meeting packets
- D. Alaska Economic Development Reports

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Doug Stark, city resident, said he would classify himself as an expert on large stores having been through the entire battle with Fred Meyer over a period of four years. One of the things he kept maintaining was the concept of the vocal minority and the silent majority. There were about 10 or 12 public hearings on the issue, 52 people that testified each time, and finally Ray Kranich got a petition together for a referendum. He said that Freddy had originally approved a 45,000 square foot store on the northern corner of Lake and Sterling. After the referendum to raise the size to 66,000 square feet passed by a percentage of 57 to 43, Freddy moved it to the town center area on CIRI property. CIRI is in favor of a large store there. Now Freddy wants to have at least 100,000 square feet and they are thinking about 75,000 because city code does provide for that size. In the process of going through the conditional use permit for the 66,000 square feet, they did all sorts of things for that permit, which is still in effect, so there is a possibility of that happening. He said the reason there was such an outpouring of opposition to the Council and pushing it to the Planning Commission, which he was kind of disgusted to find out that instead of going directly from the Economic Development Advisory Commission to the Planning Commission, you had to go through the City Council. They had the hearing which brought out all the opposition, just like at the Council hearings. Mr. Stark just wanted to express that it is not a dead issue.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Special Projects Coordinator Holen thanked the group for their input.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL MEMBER

Councilmember Wythe was absent.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Erickson thought they had a productive meeting. She updated the Commission that Council is looking at the lease policy again and she has been attending the meetings. It is to the point that they are looking at what the City Attorney, City Manager, and Port and Harbor Director think. She noted for the record that in the meetings we have used Kevin Hogan as an example and that is only because he has most recently gone through the whole process and is a great example of where the process works, where it doesn't, and where it breaks down. It has not for been for his gain that we did this. But for some reason some people have taken that attitude and she believes that was not the Commission's intention. Overall she thinks it is going rather well.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS

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Commissioner Neece wants to discuss some kind of comprehensive economic development person at the next meeting.

Commissioner Ravin thanked Ms. Holen and Commissioner Dauphinais for their work.

Commissioner Dauphinais said he loves 58 minute meetings.

ADJOURN

There being no more business to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers.

MELISSA JACOBSEN, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____